



(C.S.M.P. 71/4 VIII)

BRITISH GUIANA



REPORT

OF

THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL SERVICES

FOR THE YEAR

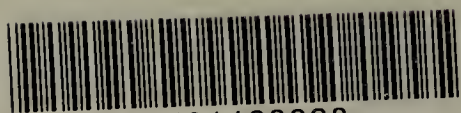
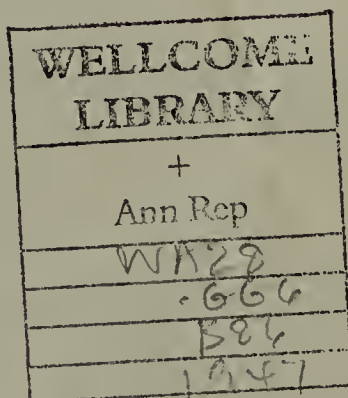
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REPORT OF THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT, BRITISH GUIANA FOR THE YEAR 1947.

1. STAFF

1. Distribution

The Medical Staff, as authorised, comprised :—

- 1 Director of Medical Services.
- 1 Deputy Director of Medical Services.
- 2 Health Officers (1 vacancy).
- 1 Supernumerary Health Officer — employed temporarily as Medical Officer, Tuberculosis.
- 1 Medical Superintendent, Public Hospital, Georgetown.
- 1 Surgeon Specialist, do. do.
- 1 Senior Physician, do. do.
- 1 Bacteriologist & Pathologist.
- 1 Assistant Surgeon, Public Hospital, Georgetown.
- 1 Medical Superintendent, Mental Hospital.
- 1 Medical Superintendent, Leprosy Hospital.
- 1 Medical Officer, Tuberculosis—Officer appointed but not yet arrived in the Colony.
- 1 Ophthalmologist.
- 1 Medical Officer—Ear, Nose & Throat.
- 1 Venereal Diseases Officer and Dermatologist.
- 1 Radiologist.
- 1 Chief Officer, Mosquito Control Service.
- 1 School Medical Officer.
- 30 Medical Officers (including 1 Temporary and 1 Supernumerary Medical Officer)

2. NEW APPOINTMENTS

Dr. E. C. Richardson was appointed, Ear, Nose & Throat Officer as from 7th July.

Dr. G. W. P. Green assumed duty as Government Ophthalmologist *vice* Dr. Dunlop, resigned on 7th September.

Dr. L. S. Jaikaran assumed duty as Prison Surgeon *vice* Dr. D. J. Taitt, retired, as from 6th November.

The following were appointed as Temporary Medical Officers—

Dr. MARY LETHAM	...	...	19th June
Dr. S. M. STUDZIENSKI	...	...	14th September
Dr. A. RELWICZ	...	...	do.
Dr. ELIZABETH KNOWLES	...	...	20th November
Dr. HUBERT KNOWLES	...	...	22nd November
Dr. L. SPYRA	...	...	6th December
Dr. J. J. TALBOT	...	...	do.

Dr. S. Fitz James acted as part-time Medical Officer until 31st March and Dr. B. L. Evan Wong until 30th September.

3. RETIREMENTS

Dr. O. M. Francis (Deputy Director of Medical Services — Supernumerary) retired on pension on 30th June and was re-engaged as Temporary Health Officer — Supernumerary — for duty as Medical Officer (Tuberculosis).

Dr. D. J. Taitt, Prison Surgeon, retired on pension with effect from 6th November.

Dr. L. R. Sharples retired on pension with effect from 7th December and was re-engaged as a Temporary Medical Officer.

4. RESIGNATIONS

Dr. E. F. J. Dunlop resigned his appointment as Government Ophthalmologist on 30th June.

Dr. A. S. Chiekrie resigned his appointment as Medical Officer with effect from 11th August.

Dr. A. Bornstein, Medical Officer (Tuberculosis), resigned with effect from 25th May.

5. TRANSFERS

Mr. A. G. Leacock, Assistant Surgeon, proceeded on transfer to Barbados with effect from 31st December.

6. LEAVE

The following Officers were on vacation leave during the year—

Mr. J. D. GRIERSON, Surgeon	
Specialist	1st January to 9th March
Dr. E. G. H. PAYNE, Venereal	
Diseases Officer	1st January to 8th April
Dr. D. J. TAITT, Prison Surgeon	6th May to 5th November
Dr. F. A. VIAPREE, Government	
Medical Officer	1st January to 9th March
Dr. L. P. GRESON, Government	
Medical Officer	28th January to 27th March
Dr. C. RAMDEHOLL, Government	
Medical Officer	15th April to 5th December
Dr. L. R. SHARPLES, Government	
Medical Officer	30th April to 6th December (now re-employed on agree- ment)
Dr. J. E. R. RAMDEHOLL, Govern- ment Medical Officer	23rd May to 22nd July

Dr. G. M. KERRY, Government Medical Officer	1st July to 31st December (prior to retirement)
Dr. M. O. LUCK, Government Medical Officer	from 7th September (Study Leave)
Dr. B. N. S. GILLETTE, Govern- ment Medical Officer	from 7th December (Study Leave)
Dr. P. F. DeCAIRES, Chief Officer, Mosquito Control Service... ..	from 7th December (Study Leave)

7. GENERAL

For the greater part of the year the Department worked with a depleted staff of Medical Officers and Medical Specialists. Two part-time officers were employed for varying periods at the Public Hospital, Georgetown. As a result of these shortages much difficulty was experienced in carrying out the normal duties of the Department. Only towards the end of the year was there any substantial improvement in the situation.

II — FINANCE

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

Medical — General	\$464,230.82
Medical — Bacteriological Depart- ment	30,784.22
Medical — X-Ray Department ...	17,358.18
Medical — Hospitals	1,206,496.58
Miscellaneous — Subventions — Municipal and Other than Municipal	22,893.64
GRAND TOTAL	<u>\$1,741,763.44</u>

Comparative totals of Expenditure—

1945	1946	1947
<u>\$1,316,282.82</u>	<u>\$1,521,430.72</u>	<u>\$1,741,763.44</u>

The percentage expenditure on the Medical, Public Health, Mosquito Control and other Services to the total Government expenditure for the whole Colony was—10.7%

Amount spent per person (total population—390,434) on all Medical Services was — \$4.46.

The percentage of expenditure on the Medical, Public Health, Mosquito Control and other Services to total Government revenue for the Colony was -

1945	1946	1947
<u>12.4%</u>	<u>11.1%</u>	<u>9.8%</u>

III — VITAL STATISTICS

	Census 1946	* Estimated 1947
Population	Males 191,209	195,812
	Females 190,116	195,045
	Persons 381,325	390,857
Total Births	1946	1947
	Males 6,777	7,668
	Females 6,652	7,541
	Undetermined Sex 1	—
	Persons 13,430	15,209
Crude Birth Rate per 1,000	35.2	38.9
Total Deaths	Males 3,103	3,222
	Females 2,791	2,914
	Undetermined Sex 1	—
	Persons 5,895	6,136
Crude Death Rate per 1,000	15.5	15.7
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Births	(Recorded Infant 87 Deaths 1167)	86
Maternal Mortality Rate per 1,000	(Recorded Maternal 10 Deaths 130)	9

* The Vital Statistics for the year are treated in greater detail in the Registrar General's Report for 1947 which is to be published separately. It is worthy of note that the birth rate of 38.9 per 1,000 of population is the highest on record being 0.7 per 1,000 in excess of the 38.2 per 1,000 record figure attained in 1942.

IV — COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

There was no outbreak of epidemic disease during the year.

Notified cases of Enteric Fever and Tuberculosis (all forms) for the whole Colony totalled 353 and 215 respectively. Both show a decrease on the 1945 and 1946 figures as follows:—

	1945	1946	1947
Enteric Fever	442	504	353
Tuberculosis	260	275	215

MALARIA

This disease was responsible for the highest specific morbidity figures and the highest specific mortality figures in the Colony, from a single cause, during the year.

15,490 cases of Malaria with 120 deaths were recorded from Public Hospitals, Estate Hospitals, Medical Districts and Dispensaries in the Colony.

Although these figures seem high it is to be noted that the incidence represents a decrease of 34.1% on that of the previous year, there being 23,800 cases of malaria with 274 deaths reported during 1946.

It is a noteworthy fact that these reductions in malaria have been obtained *pari passu* with the expansion of the work of the D.D.T. residual spraying section of the Mosquito Control Service as detailed in the separate report presented by the Honorary Government Malariologist; during the year 262,832 persons were afforded protection by the D.D.T. residual spraying of their homes. These persons comprise 89% of the total coastal population exposed to endemic malaria.

INFLUENZA

1,711 cases with 3 deaths were reported during the year as compared with 245 cases and 7 deaths during 1946.

CHICKEN POX

There were recorded 114 cases in 1947 as against 67 in the previous year.

DIPHTHERIA

54 cases were notified as compared with 24 cases in 1946.

SOCIAL DISEASES

There were 43,004 attendances at the Social Diseases Clinic during the year, representing an increase of 3,180 attendances i.e. 7.4% on the figures for 1946.

Defaulting incidence, though high, showed a reduction on the figures for 1946. The sustained "follow up" activities of the male and female Social Welfare Officers are thought to have been largely responsible for this improvement.

It was found possible to extend Penicillin treatment in Neisserian disease, but intensive Mapharsen—Bismuth Therapy only was used for cases of syphilis.

LEPROSY

Medical records revealed 1,095 positive cases of leprosy in the Colony with an incidence of 2.9 per 1,000 of the population, as compared with 1,074 positive cases recorded in 1946. Of the 1,095 positive cases, 334 were in-patients at the Mahaica Leprosarium and 761 received treatment at the various clinics in the Colony.

Occupational therapy was continued during the year with beneficial results to the patients.

46,783 school children were examined in a Colony-wide school survey. 106 early cases were discovered thereby and treated at the various clinics.

During the year chemotherapy trials were continued. Diasone, Sulphetrone and Promin — drugs of the sulphone group — being used. Most encouraging results were obtained, especially in ulcer cases, the rapid healing of which resulted in a great saving of dressings.

V — PUBLIC HEALTH

A. COASTLAND ACTIVITIES

Every effort was made to maintain general health standards on the coastlands. Special activities were undertaken in connection with Cinemas and Private Schools.

An investigation of the sanitation standards of the town of New Amsterdam was undertaken and major improvements were embodied in a report submitted to its Municipal Authority.

174 Rice Factories were certified, and permission given for 25 new coconut oil factories to be established — all having conformed with the prescribed sanitary standards of the Central Board of Health.

HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING

During the year 68 layout schemes were approved by the Central Board of Health, and 70 were registered on completion of the approved works.

964 building applications were considered by the Central Board of Health and 922 were approved.

170 building applications were approved under a special relaxation policy developed during the war years.

On sugar estates, considerable improvement has been effected in the matter of housing both staff and labourers.

The old system of housing overseers and other supervising personnel in barrack quarters has been generally abandoned and separate houses provided in lieu.

Similar advancement has been made in respect of housing subordinate staff.

In the matter of accommodating general labourers and their families, ranges and four-family dwellings have been replaced by detached or semi-detached cottages on most estates. These represent a distinct improvement. They afford better lighting, ventilation and floor space as also more adequate kitchen accommodation. Some estates have embarked on a policy of laying out portions of front lands as building sites for labourers who desire to erect their own houses on estate lands. In order to facilitate such schemes, old ranges are sold to prospective builders at reasonable rates thus enabling the builders to utilize materials which, otherwise are still in short supply. A few estates also assist by making advances of money to prospective builders.

Estate housing schemes projected under 5 and 10-year development plans are proceeding slowly on account of the scarcity of building materials.

The Housing Scheme for Leguan, Wakenaam and the Essequibo coast instituted in 1945 by the Rural Housing Board made satisfactory progress during 1947.

During the year, Government passed the following two major ordinances which, it is hoped, will be given practical effect shortly—

- (i) The Housing Ordinance, 1946
- (ii) The Country and Town Planning Ordinance, 1946.

SANITATION

WATER SUPPLY

Steady progress with the expansion and maintenance of the Pure Water Supply Scheme was reported despite difficulties caused by materials being difficult to obtain.

The activities of Public Health Officers of all ranks included —

Routine Domiciliary visits 111,212

Special visits to Provision shops and Bakeries 8,378

MEAT

12,750 examinations of meat were undertaken and 3,856 parts of carcasses or whole carcasses condemned.

OTHER FOODS

161,275 food samples were inspected and 596 items condemned.

NUISANCE NOTICES

17,862 nuisance notices were served and 99 convictions for non-compliance obtained.

1,745 samples of foodstuffs and of milk were collected and 236 resulted in prosecutions.

B. HINTERLAND ACTIVITIES

Substantially increased interest was taken in the health and living conditions of the aboriginal and settler communities living in remote areas of the Interior.

A series of Health and Medical Surveys of the general problems peculiar to those areas were made and fully reported upon. These surveys covered settlements in the Rupununi Savannahs and along the valleys of the Pomeroon, Aruka, Barima, Barama Waini, Wenamu, Mazaruni, Potaro and Corentyne river systems.

G. CONFERENCES

The Colony was represented at the Twelfth Pan American Public Health Conference and the Second Pan American Health Education Conference held in Caracas, Venezuela; as also at the Senior Medical Officers' Conference held under the auspices of the Comptroller of Development and Welfare at Barbados.

D. PUBLIC HEALTH LEGISLATION

The following items of Public Health Legislation were made statutory during the year —

- (i) The Health (Mosquito Control) Regulations legalising unification of the constituent branches of the Mosquito Control Service and, in particular, providing for compulsory spraying of houses in declared areas.
- (ii) A Bill further to amend the Public Health Ordinance, 1934, with respect to sanitary districts and the power to make regulations. The object of this measure was to sub-divide the areas of the Colony in the same manner as for local government purposes.

E. MATERNITY AND INFANT WELFARE

Maternity and Infant Welfare work was maintained in the various districts under the supervision of medical officers and two Inspectors of Midwives.

Local Committees played a not unimportant part by rendering voluntary assistance at clinic sessions, stimulating the interest of attending members and organising entertainments in order to raise funds to further the social aspects of the work of the League.

During the year, 12,403 attendances by expectant mothers were recorded. This is an increase of 1,069 attendances on the previous year.

26,003 attendances of infants were recorded in 1947. This is an increase of 1,605 attendances on the figures for 1946.

F. SCHOOL HEALTH

Routine Medical Examinations of 2,000 pupils from 18 urban and 9 rural schools were carried out by the School Nurses. 400 of these pupils were referred to the School Medical Officer for detailed medical examinations and some 250 underwent complete physical examinations. The most prevalent defects observed were dental caries and conditions referable to deficiency of protective food substances.

A survey of the elementary pupils of Georgetown and Kitty schools was undertaken to ascertain the number of necessitous children requiring school meals. 1,664 children were found to be necessitous out of a total of 9,000 examined in Georgetown, and 250 were necessitous out of 1,125 examined in Kitty.

Prophylactic dental treatment, extractions and fillings were carried out on necessitous cases by part-time School Dental Officers in New Amsterdam and Georgetown.

G. NUTRITION

SCHOOL SURVEYS

The Nutrition Committee functioned throughout the year and under its auspices nutrition surveys were conducted by the School Medical Officer on 800 children in the schools of Mahaicony and the West Bank, Demerara River.

FOOD YEAST

At two School Breakfast Centres 200 children were given Food Yeast as a supplement to their regular school meals in connection with a nutritional experiment which is continuing.

BASIC STOCKTAKING

Statistical surveys were conducted and reports submitted to the Nutrition Committee on general and specific problems arising out of —

- (i) the Colony consumption of certain imported foodstuffs for the period 1919-1945.
- (ii) the utilization of certain locally produced foodstuffs for Colony consumption during the period 1929-1945.
- (iii) the evaluation of imported and locally produced items in the Colony's dietary in terms of their nutrient content, thus enabling comparison with Dr. B. S. Platt's figures for Barbados and Trinidad.
- (iv) the estimation of the degree of self-sufficiency in respect of certain foodstuffs and beverages.
- (v) the establishment of basic tables of consumption of both locally grown and imported vegetable foodstuffs per head of the population per annum for the period 1939-1945 as also the percentage distribution of the various nutrients in the dietary in respect of each foodstuff. These tables serve as a useful yardstick for the estimation of protein consumption levels.

A detailed classification of the percentage distribution of protein sources, whether of animal or vegetable origin, in the dietary of the Colony was prepared and comparison made with the standards laid down by Dr. B. S. Platt.

Again, a detailed classification of the percentage distribution of certain essential minerals and protective food substances in the local and imported foodstuffs was submitted.

As a special undertaking an estimate of the probable effects of a ten per centum cut on certain annual imports, e.g. wheat flour for currency restriction reasons, was made.

H. HEALTH EDUCATION

Health Education activities undertaken were as follows—

- (i) Education of pupils in habits of healthful living through a series of lecture-demonstrations in the classrooms conducted by the School Medical Officer, School Nurses and Sanitary Inspectors also by promoting both the keeping of health notebooks by pupils and the staging of health plays.
- (ii) Lectures to teachers at the Teachers' Training Centre by the School Medical Officer, Health Officers and Specialist Officers and lecture-demonstrations in home nursing given by the School Nurses. Student teachers were given opportunity to see how the school health programme worked in the field, and to study health educational methods and technique.
- (iii) Conferences with individual parents to impart to them useful information referable to the health needs of their children.
- (iv) Health Visitor and Midwife lectures were given at antenatal clinics to expectant mothers as also those mothers concerned with the care of infants and infant feeding.
- (v) Display of the permanent nutrition exhibit prepared in 1946, at two public exhibitions and in two secondary schools.
- (vi) Through the courtesy of the British Council representatives and the U.S. Vice-Consul, exhibition of health and nutritional films (inclusive of Walt Disney Technicolour productions) to members of the Nutrition Committee and representatives of kindred organisations.
- (vii) An elementary pamphlet on "Rice" prepared by the Nutrition Committee and widely publicized in the Press as also in B.P.I. supplements during the year.

I. INDUSTRIAL HEALTH

British Guiana remained free of any disease directly attributable to occupational hazards though cases continued to come to notice of allergic conditions of persons contacting the dusts associated with the manufacture of Rice and Sugar. Desensitization therapy directed by the Government Pathologist has benefited many, but in some, only a permanent change of occupation or of residence could be advocated in order to effect amelioration.

The use of water-sprays and efficient respirators was advocated in order to minimise the occupational hazards incurred by persons engaged on stone crushing and rock drilling work in mining areas.

J. PORT HEALTH AND QUARANTINE SERVICE

MARITIME

During the year 1,768 vessels of all types were visited by Port Health Officers or the authorised visiting officers. This total include 367 ocean-going steamers.

Statutory provisions were enforced against all vessels lying alongside the wharves of the ports of Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Mackenzie.

One ship was fumigated against rodents.

Quarantine restrictions prescribed under the International Sanitary Conventions of 1944, were maintained against all vessels arriving from infected areas, no fewer than 78 persons being placed under surveillance in respect of Typhus Fever precaution.

AERIAL NAVIGATION

153 aircraft arriving in the Colony were dealt with, certificates of Personal Declaration of Health being obtained from 2,161 passengers and quarantine restrictions imposed as necessary.

VI—CENTRAL MEDICAL LABORATORY & BRANCH LABORATORIES

The total number of examinations done at the Central Medical Laboratory and the Branch Laboratories as compared with the figures for 1946 are given below —

	1946	1947
Central Medical Laboratory	32,073	43,634
Public Hospital, Georgetown, Laboratory	17,163	8,721
Best Tuberculosis Hospital Laboratory	3,243	3,158
Suddie Hospital Laboratory	2,454	2,590
Leprosy Hospital Laboratory	2,097	4,166
Bartica Hospital Laboratory	972	78
Mabaruma Hospital Laboratory	—	1,509
Berbice Hospital Laboratory	1,547	2,994
	<hr/> 59,564 <hr/>	<hr/> 66,850 <hr/>

During the year 16,179 blood examinations for syphilis were done as compared with 14,893 in the previous year.

WATER SAMPLES

104 water samples were examined bacteriologically during the year. This number is an increase of 54 on the previous year.

MILK AND DAIRY PRODUCTS

140 samples of milk and dairy products were bacteriologically examined during the year.

RATS FOR PLAGUE — (Port Health)

359 rats were examined for evidence of Plague. All were negative.

MALARIA

1,036 blood examinations were positive for malaria, as compared with 1,528 positives in 1946 and 2,454 positives in 1945.

MEDICO-LEGAL

38 *post mortem* examinations of medico-legal interest were performed during 1947. There were 307 exhibits and 661 specimens examined as compared with 97 specimens examined during 1946.

MORBID ANATOMY AND PATHOLOGICAL HISTOLOGY

201 specimens were examined during 1947.

TRAINING OF MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIANS

6 technicians from the West Indian Islands were trained at the Central Medical Laboratory during the year. In addition, 1 technician from the Department of Agriculture was given training in elementary laboratory work.

BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

This was established for the first time during the year.

400 donors were listed. Each gave blood during the year and 326 gave fresh blood for immediate transfusion — a total of 74 pints of blood being collected.

1,781 blood grouping and non-matching experiments were carried out.

VII — HOSPITALS

Institutional care of the sick continued to be provided by Government in 5 General Hospitals; 1 Tuberculosis Sanitorium; 1 Mental Hospital and 1 Leprosy Hospital.

GENERAL HOSPITALS

The total number of patients treated as In-patients in all general hospitals was 24,219 with 1,185 deaths. General medical cases numbered 21,230 and surgical cases 2,989. Ear, Nose and Throat patients numbered 2,733 and Eye patients numbered 2,945.

The total number of Out-patients treated at general hospitals was 49,580.

At dispensaries throughout the Colony 59,578 patients received treatment.

Dental cases treated were 16,029.

BEST TUBERCULOSIS HOSPITAL

The number of persons treated as In-patients was 393. 169 of the patients admitted were suffering from the late chronic phases of the disease. The largest number — 29, in any one age group — was between 20 and 29 years. 123 deaths occurred during 1947.

MENTAL HOSPITAL

The total number of patients treated was 774, an increase of 64 on the previous year. There were 77 deaths, the largest number — 25, being due to degenerative diseases of the cardio-vascular system.

X-RAY DEPARTMENT

The total number of patients dealt with in this Department was 6,961.

331 cases received X-Ray therapy during the year.

3,636 cases received electro-therapeutic treatment during the year.

Return of Principal Diseases causing Morbidity and Deaths at all Public Hospitals, 1947.

A. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

	Cases	Deaths
Malaria	1,334	57
Typhoid	194	37
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	110	21
Syphilis	286	16
Gonorrhoea	389	2
Measles	147	—
Influenza	275	—
Diphtheria	52	3
	2,787	136
Other Infectious Diseases	1,341	64
Total	4,128	200

B. NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Diseases of Nervous System ..	762	79
Diseases of Circulatory System	1,054	220
Diseases of Digestive System	2,227	171
Diseases of Respiratory System	1,492	120
Diseases of Urinary System	295	49
Diseases of Locomotion	3,069	31
Diseases of Childbirth, etc.	455	40
Diseases Ill defined	1,534	5
Miscellaneous	10,439	276

VIII — BOARD OF EXAMINERS, CHEMISTS AND DRUGGISTS

Ten meetings of the Board were held during the year. Two examinations were conducted. Nine candidates were successful at the First Professional Examination, and eleven were awarded certificates of competency to practise as Chemists and Druggists.

Draft amendments were made to Section 34 (1) of the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance Chapter 10 to permit authorised persons to enter and inspect all shops and stores selling drugs. The existing law permitted entry only in stores under the supervision of Registered Chemists and Druggists.

IX — VISITORS

Miss E. B. McManus, C.B.E., formerly Matron of Guy's Hospital and Miss B. Shenton, M.B.E., Superintendent of Nurses and Supervisor of Midwives of the Herefordshire County Nursing Association paid a visit to British Guiana on the invitation of the Secretary of State as representatives of English Nursing Organisations. The results of their observations are awaited.

Other visitors during the year included Dr. J. W. P. Harkness, C.M.G., Medical Adviser to the Comptroller, Development and Welfare, British West Indies. Dr. George Campbell, Leprosy Officer, Government of Trinidad and Dr. A. Paliello, Chief Officer, Yellow Fever Control Service, N. Brazil.

X — SPECIAL REPORTS

In presenting this general departmental report only a concise summary of the principal features of the year's work has been attempted. For matters of details reference should be made to one or other of the following specific reports which have been submitted separately —

I	.....	.....	Central Medical Laboratory, Georgetown.
II	.....	.....	Best Sanatorium, West Coast, Demerara.
III	.....	.....	Social Diseases Clinic, Georgetown.
IV	.....	.....	Public Hospital, Georgetown.
V	.....	.....	Public Hospital, Berbice.
VI	.....	.....	Public Hospital, Suddie.
VII	.....	.....	Leprosy Hospital, Mahaica.
VIII	.....	.....	Mental Hospital, Fort Canje, Berbice.
IX	.....	.....	School Medical Service, Georgetown.
X	.....	.....	Mosquito Control Service, Georgetown.
XI	.....	.....	Malaria Research Section of Mosquito Control Service, Georgetown.